

ben the customes of perturbaciouns, and this power they han, that they may moeve a man out of his place, that is to seyn, fro the stablenes & perfeccioun of his knowinge; but, certes, they may nat alarace him, ne aliene him in al. But I wolde that thou woldest answer to this: remembrethow that thou art a man?

Why sholde I nat remembre that? quod I. Maystow nat telle me thanne, quod she, what thing is a man?

NESTOW me nat, quod I, whether that I be a resonable mortal beest? I woot wel, & I confesse wel that I am it.

Wistestow never yit that thou were any other thing? quod she.

No, quod I.

Now woot I, quod she, other cause of thy maladye, and that right grete. Thou hast left for to knowen thyself, what thou art; thorough whiche I have pleyntly founden the cause of thy maladye, or elles the entree of recoveringe of thyne heles. for why, for thou art confounded with foryeting of thyself, forthy sorwes, tow that thou art exiled of thy propre goodes. And for thou ne wost what is the ende of thynges, forthy demestow that felonous and wikked men ben mighty and weleful. And for thou hast foryeten by whiche governements the world is governed, forthy wenestow that these mutaciouns of fortune fleten withoute governour. These ben grete causes not only to maladye, but, certes, grete causes to deeth. But I thanke the auctor and the maker of heles, that nature hath not al forleten thee. I have grete norissinges of thyne heles, and that is, the sothe sentence of governaunce of the worlde; that thou bilevest that the governinge of it nis nat subject ne underput to the folie of these happes aventureus, but to the resoun of God. And therfor doute

DE CONSOLATIONE PHILOSOPHIE. BOOK II. PROSE I.

Postea paulisper conticuit.

AFTER THIS SHE STINTE A LITTEL; AND, AFTER THAT SHE HADDE GADERED BY ATEMPE STILLNESSE MYN ATTENCIOUN, SHE SEIDE THUS: (As who mighte seyn thus: After these thynges she stinte a litel; and whan she aperceved by atempe stillnesse that I was ententif to herkene hir, she bigan to speke in this wyse): Yif I, quod she, have understanden and knowen outrely the causes and the habit of thy maladye, thou languishest

thee nothing; for of this litel spark thyn hete of lyf shal shyne.

FOR AS MOCH as it is nat tyme yit of faster remedies, and the nature of ofte as they casten away sothe opiniouns, they clothen hem in false opiniouns, of which false opiniouns the derkenesse of perturbacioun wereth up, that confoundeth the verray insight: & that derkenesse shal I assaye somewhat to maken thynne; so that, after that the derkenesse of deceyvinge desiringes is don away, thou mowe knowe the shyninge of verray light.

Metre VII.
Nubibus atris.

THE STERRES, covered with blaie cloudes, ne mowen yeten adoun no light. Yif the trouble wind that bight huster, turning & walwing the see, meddeth the hete, that is to seyn, the boyling up from the botme; the waves, that whylom weren clere as glas & lyke to the faire clere dayes, withstande anon the sightes of men by the filthe and ordure that is resolved. And the fletinge stream, that royleth down dyversly fro heyemountaignes, is arested and resisted ofte tyme by the encounteringe of a stoon that is departed and fallen from som roche.

AND FORTHY, yif thou wolt loken and demen sooth with cleer light, and holden the wey with a right path, weyve thou joye, dryf fro thee drede, flemethou hope, ne lat no sorwe approche; that is to seyn, lat non of these four passiouns overcomen thee or blende thee. For cloudy and derke is thilke thought, and bounde with brydles, wheras these thynges regnen.

Explicit Liber Primus.

and art defeted for desyr and talent of thy rather fortune. She, that ilke fortune only, that is chaunged, as thou feynest, to theward, hath perverted the cleer nesse and the estat of thy corage. I understonde the felefolde colours and deceites of thilke merveilous monstre fortune, & how she useth ful flateringe familiaritee with hem that she enforceth to bigyle; so longe, til that she confounde with unsufferable sorwe hem that she hath left in despeyr unpurveyed. And yif thou remembreth wel the kinde, the maneres, and the desert of thilke fortune, thou shalt wel knowe that, as in hir, thou never haddest ne hast ylost any fair thing. But, as I trowe, I shal nat gretly travailen to do theeremem-

ber on these thynges. for thou were wont to hertelen and despysen hir, with manly wordes, whan she was blaudissinge and present, & purswedest hir with sentences that were drawn out of myn entree, that is to seyn, out of myn informacioun. But no soodein mutacioun ne bitydeth nat withoure a manere chaunginge of corages; and so is it befallen that thou art a litel departed fro the pees of thy thought.

AND NOW is tyme that thou drinke and ataste some softe and delitable thynges; so that, whan they ben entred within thee, it mowe maken wey to strengere drinkes of medicynes. Com now forth therfore the suasioun of swete nesse rethorion, whiche that goth only the right wey, whyl she forsaketh nat myne estatute. And with Rhetorice com forth Musicke, a damisel of our hous, that singeth now lighter moedes or prolaciouns, now beyer. What eyleth thee, man? What is it that hath cast thee into morninge and into wepinge? I trowe that thou hast seyn som new thing and uncouth. Thou wenest that fortune be chaunged ayein thee; but thou wenest wrong, yif thou that wene. Alwey the ben hir maneres; she hath rather kept, as to theward, hir propre stablenesse in the chaunginge of hirself. Right swich was she whan she flattered thee, & deceived thee with unweleful lykings of fals weleful nesse. Thou hast now knowen and ataynt the doutous or double visage of thilke blinde goddesse fortune. She, that yit covereth hir and wimpleth hir to other folk, hath shewed hir everydel to thee. Yif thou aprovest hir and thenkest that she is good, use hir maneres and pleyne thee nat. And yif thou agrysest hir false trecherye, despyse and cast away hir that pleyeth so harmfully; for she, that is now cause of so muche sorwe to thee, sholde ben cause to thee of pees & of joye. She hath forsaken thee, forsothe; the whiche that never man may ben sikker that she ne shal forsake him. Glose. But natheles, some bokes han the text thus: for sothe, she hath forsaken thee, ne ther nis no man sikker that she ne hath nat forsaken.

OLD ESTOW than thilke weleful nesse precious to thee that shal passen? And is present fortune dereworth to thee, which that nis nat feithful for to dwelle; and, whan she goth away, that she bringeth a wight in sorwe? for sin she may nat ben withholden at a mannes wille, she maketh him a wrecche whan she departeth fro him. What other thing is flittinge fortune but a maner shewing of wrecchednesse that is to comen? Ne it ne suffyseth not only to loken on thyng that is present bifrom the eyen of a man. But

wisdom loketh and amesureth the ende of thynges; & the same chaunginge from oon into another, that is to seyn, from adversitee into prosperitee, maketh that the manaces of fortune ne ben not for to dreden, ne the flateringes of hir to ben desired. Thus, at the laste, it bihoveth thee to suffren with evene wille in pacience al that is don inwith the floor of fortune, that is to seyn, in this world, sin thou hast ones put thynekke under the yok of hir. for yif thou wolt wryten a lawe of wendinge & of dwellinge to fortune, whiche that thou hast chosen frely to ben thy lady, artow nat wrongful in that, & makest fortune wroth and aspere by thyne impatience, & yit thou mayst nat chaunge hir?

If thou committest and bitakest thy sailes to the winde, thou shalt be shoven, not thider that thou woldest, but whider that the wind shoveth thee. Yif thou castest thy sedes into the felde, thou sholdest han in minde that the yeres ben, amonges, otherwhyle plenteuous and otherwhyle bareyne. Thou hast bitaken thyself to the governaunce of fortune, and forthy it bihoveth thee to ben obeisaunt to the maneres of thy lady. Enforcest thou thee to aresten or withholden the swift nesse & the swigh of hir turninge whele? O thou fool of alle mortal foolles, if fortune bigan to dwelle stable, she cesede thanne to ben fortune!

Metre I.

Hec cum superba verterit vices dextra.

HAN fortune with a proud right hand hath torned hir chaunginge stoundes, she fareth lyk the maneres of the boilinge Eurype. Glose. Eurype is an arm of the see that ebbeth and floweth; and somtyme the stream is on o syde, and somtyme on the other. Text. She, cruel fortune, casteth adoun kinges that whylom weren ydrad; & she, deceivable, enhaunseth up the humble chere of him that is discomfited. Ne she neither hereth ne rekketh of wrecchede wepinges; & she is so hard that she laugheth and scorneth the wepinges of hem, the whiche she hath makid wepe with hir free wille. Thus she pleyeth, & thus she proveth hir strengthes; and sheweth a greet wonder to alle hir servautes, yif that a wight is seyn weleful, and overthrowe in an houre.

Boethius de
Consolatione
Philosophie.
Book II.